



Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
Phone 406-542-5500
April 8, 2018

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review, a draft environmental assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposal to accept assignment (delegation) of the "right of public hunting access" component of two conservation easements (CE) in Powell County to be held by Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT). The Graveley CE and the Warm Springs Creek CE would be the result of a multistage project whereby the Graveley family would use funds generated from the sale of a CE on their current 5,167-acre ranch to purchase adjacent property (3,110 acres) currently owned by The Conservation Fund (TCF). A CE would then be placed on the adjacent property (Warm Springs Creek) to create a combined conservation footprint of 8,277 acres. (Because the properties would be managed as a single ranch for the foreseeable future, the two CEs are referred to here as the Graveley Ranch CEs.)

FVLT would purchase the Graveley Ranch CEs to permanently protect the property's wildlife habitat and conservation values by preventing subdivision but keeping the land in private ownership and management. The CEs would protect important big-game winter range, a variety of habitats for nongame wildlife species, and public hunting opportunities. FVLT is seeking to assign the management of the public hunting access portion of the CEs to FWP. The Upper Clark Fork River Basin Remediation and Restoration Advisory Council voted to recommend complete funding from the Montana Department of Justice Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) to complete this proposed project. No FWP funds would be used to acquire the proposed CEs; therefore, the proposed action is for FWP to accept the assignment of the right of public hunting access, in perpetuity, as further set forth in the CEs to be held by FVLT.

The draft EA for this proposal is available for review and comment. The EA may also be obtained by mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; phoning 406-542-5500; emailing shrose@mt.gov; or viewing FWP's Internet website <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("News," then "Recent Public Notices"). Comments on the draft EA and the proposal may be made online on the EA's webpage or may be directed by mail or email to the addresses above. Comments must be received by FWP no later than May 7, 2019.

FWP will hold a public hearing in Drummond on April 23, 2019 (Tuesday) at 6:30 p.m. at the Drummond Community Center (54 East Broad Street) to discuss the proposed public hunting access for the conservation easement, answer questions and take public comment.

As part of the decision-making process under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), I plan to issue the Decision Notice for this EA soon after the end of the public comment period. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission has the decision-making authority for FWP acquisition of interests in land, and the Commission will be asked to render its decision on this proposal at its June 13, 2019 meeting in Missoula (Region 2 headquarters, address above).

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr